

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 COPENHAGEN 2156

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SUBJ: ANKER JORGENSEN'S FIRST FIVE MONTHS-AN EXAMINATION

REF: COPENHAGEN 2155

1. REFTEL IS A SUMMARY OF THE PRESENT MESSAGE WHICH EXAMINES THE DANISH POLITICAL SCENE UNDER THE SECOND SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT OF ANKER JORGENSEN.

2. THE MINORITY SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT OF ANKER JORGENSEN, WHICH HAS JUST COMPLETED FIVE MONTHS IN OFFICE, HAS CREATED A FAR MORE RESPECTABLE PUBLIC IMAGE THAN DID THE FIRST JORGENSEN GOVERNMENT (OCTOBER 1972 TO DECEMBER 1973). THAT IMAGE IS STILL DOMINATED BY THE PERSON, ANKER JORGENSEN, BUT THE PICTURE OF A RADICAL SOCIALIST, ANTI-AMERICAN LABOR LEADER, WHOSE SINGLE-MINDED GOAL WAS THE INTRODUCTION OF "ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY", HAS BEEN REPLACED BY THAT OF A MODERATE, PRAGMATIC LABOR POLITICIAN, WHO IS WILLING, IF NOT TO
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COMPROMISE HIS SOCIALIST OBJECTIVES, AT LEAST TO PUT THEM

ON THE SHELF IN FAVOR OF PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO EVERYDAY PROBLEMS.

3. EVEN POLITICAL OPPONENTS GIVE JORGENSEN CREDIT FOR HIS NEW STYLE. "I WAS MISTAKEN ABOUT ANKER", A WIDELY PUBLISHED QUOTATION BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY, JENS MOLLER, IS TYPICAL OF THESE COMMENTS. THAT THE PUBLIC HAS ALSO PERCEIVED THE NEW IMAGE CAN BE SEEN FROM RECENT POLL FIGURES. WHEN ASKED TO RATE THE GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE, THE RESPONSE WAS AS FOLLOWS: GOOD - 11 PERCENT; PRETTY GOOD - 50 PERCENT; POOR - 27 PERCENT; DON'T KNOW - 10 PERCENT. IN MAY 1973, IN THE MIDDLE OF JORGENSEN'S FIRST GOVERNMENT, THE RESPONSE TO THE SAME QUESTION WAS: GOOD - 5 PERCENT, PRETTY GOOD - 24 PERCENT; POOR - 63 PERCENT; DON'T KNOW - 8 PERCENT.

4. THE CHANGE IN PUBLIC IMAGE IS NOT DUE TO ANY FUNDAMENTAL POLICY REVISION WITHIN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY; IT IS DUE MERELY TO THE ALTERED PARLIAMENTARY CONFIGURATION. DURING THE FIRST JORGENSEN ADMINISTRATION, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS HAD 70 SEATS IN PARLIAMENT AND, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE SOCIALIST PEOPLE'S PARTY'S 19 SEATS, ENJOYED A ONE-VOTE ABSOLUTE MAJORITY. IN THE PRESENT PARLIAMENT, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS HAVE ONLY 54 SEATS, OR A FLAT 30 PERCENT OF THE 179-SEAT PARLIAMENT. EVEN IF IT HAD THE SUPPORT, WHICH IT DOES NOT, OF THE PARTIES ON THE FAR LEFT (THE COMMUNIST PARTY (DKP), THE SOCIALIST PEOPLE'S PARTY (SPP) AND THE LEFT SOCIALIST REPRESENTING TOGETHER 12 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL SEATS), THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE IN A SUBSTANTIAL MINORITY POSITION. ON THE NON-SOCIALIST SIDE OF THE HOUSE, THERE ARE ALSO TWO BLOCS - A MODERATE GROUP OF PARTIES AROUND THE LIBERALS WHICH TOGETHER REPRESENTS 44 PERCENT OF THE SEATS AND MOGENS GLISTRUP'S PROGRESS PARTY ON THE EXTREME RIGHT WITH 14 PERCENT.

5. IN THIS FOUR-BLOC PARLIAMENTARY ARRANGEMENT, ANKER JORGENSEN'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN FORCED TO

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LOOK FOR SUPPORT "ACROSS THE CENTER" OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. IN SO DOING, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS HAVE FACED THE RESISTANCE OF THEIR MAJOR OPPONENT, THE LIBERALS, WHO HAVE SOUGHT WITH DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN THE COHESION OF THE MODERATE GROUPING. NEVERTHELESS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS MANAGED TO ENTICE THE RADICALS, AND SOMETIMES THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY, AWAY FROM THIS BLOC AND ON OCCASION EVEN FORCED THE LIBERALS AND THE CONSERVATIVES

TO SUPPORT VARIOUS PEICES OF LEGISLATION. BY PUTTING TOGETHER SUCH SHIFTING MAJORITIES OR PLURALITIES, THE GOVERNMENT HAS SUCCEDED IN "MAKING PARLIAMENT WORK AGAIN", AS ONE JOURNALIST EXPRESSED IT, AND HAS REGISTERED AN IMPRESSIVE RECORD OF LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS.

6. LEGISLATIVE RECORD - THE FIRST MAJRO SUCCESS WAS, OF COURSE, THE INCOMES POLICY LEGISLATION IN APRIL WHICH BROKE THE NATIONWIDE STALEMATE OVER WAGE NEGOTIATIONS AND SET MODEST WAGE AND PRICE PARAMETERS FOR THE FOLLOW-ING TWO YEARS. THIS TOUGH POLICY - WHICH ONLY THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS COULD HAVE MADE WORK - HAS BEEN STAUNCHLY UPHELD IN SUBSEQUENT MONTHS DESPITE WIDESPREAD STRIKES FOR WAGE INCREASES BEYOND THE ESTABLISHED PARAMETERS. THE SETTLEMENT HAS ALOS CONTRIBUTED TO THE SHARP REDUCTION IN INFLATION FROM 12 PERCENT TO APPROXIMATELY 5 TO 6 PERCENT AT THE CURRENT ANNUAL RATE ACCORDING TO OECD ESTIMATES.

7. THE SECOND MAJOR SUCCESS WAS SCORED WHEN PARLIAMENT APPROVED THE BUDGET BILL. THIS DKR 36 BILLION BUDGET (ABOUT US\$ 6 BILLION) WAS PREPARED BY THE OUTGOING LIBERAL PARTY GOVERNMENT AND INCORPORATED DKR 5-6 BILLION (US\$1 BILLION) SAVINGS IN, INTER ALIA, PUBLIC WELFARE EXPENSES. THOUGH THE GOVERNMENT RESTORED DKR 2 BILLION (US\$350 MILLION TO THE SOCIAL WELFARE BUDGET, ITS ACCEPTANCE OF WHAT WAS FUNDAMENTALLY LIBERAL PARTY ECONOMIC POLICY WAS TYPICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PRAGMATIC, COMPROMISE APPROACH IN OTHER AREAS AS WELL.

8. THE THIRD MAJOR LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENT, PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL OF THE F-16 PURCHASE, REQUIRED A DELICATE ACCOMMODATION WITH THE RADICALS, WHOSE NEUTRALIST, ANTI-CONFIDENTIAL

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MILITARY TRADTION MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE BROKEN OPEN THE CURRENT FOUR-YEAR DEFENSE COMPROMISE OVER THIS EXTRA-ORDINARLILY LARGE OUTLAY FOR MILITARY PROCUREMENT.

9. THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFECTIVENESS IN "MAKING PARLIAMENT WORK AGAIN" WAS EVEN MORE EVIDENT IN TWO OTHER COMPROMISE SOLUTIONS TO SEEMINGLY UNSOLVABLE POLITICAL QUANDARIES THAT HAVE PLAGUED EVERY GOVERNMENT OVER THE PAST FIVE TO TEN YEARS, THE REFORM OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND HOUSING POLICY. THE FORMER HAS ESPECIALLY AGITATED THE POLITICAL SCENE SINCE EARLY 1974 WHEN DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION BAUNSBÆK JENSEN CHARGED THAT THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WAS BEING USED FOR EXTENSIVE LEFTIST POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION. THE LIBERAL MINISTER OF EDUCATION, TOVE NIELSEN, SUPPORTED HIM IN THIS CHARGE AND PROPOSED AN AMENDMENT TO THE BASIC

OBJECTIVE PARAGRAPH IN THE LAW REGARDING PRIMARY EDUCATION
REQUIRING TEACHERS "TO AVOID ONE-SIDED INDOCTRINATION OF
THEIR STUDENTS". COMPOUNDING THIS BASIC IDEOLOGICAL
PROBLEM - WHICH EXACERBATED THE SOCIALIST/NON-SOCIALIST
DIVISION IN PARLIAMENT - WERE VARIOUS CLASS-INTEREST
ISSUES ON SUCH MATTERS AS THE DIVISION OF STUDENTS INTO
VOCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC TRACKS, THE ELIMINATION OF FINAL
EXAMINATIONS, AND THE EXTENT AND COMPULSORY NATURE OF
RELIGIOUS TRAINING. NEVERTHELESS, THE GOVERNMENT'S
COMPROMISE SOLUTION TO THIS ENTIRE SET OF PROBLEMS
OBTAINED THE SUPPORT OF THE RADICALS, THE LIBERALS, THE
CHRISTIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY, AND EVEN, SURPRISINGLY, THE
SOCIALIST PEOPLE'S PARTY, AND WAS ADOPTED IN PARLIAMENT
ON JUNE 4.

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10. THE HOUSING BILL ADOPTED ON JUNE 6 WAS A MODIFICATION
AND CONFIRMATION OF THE ORIGINAL HOUSING COMPROMISE WHICH
SIX PARTIES AGREED UPON IN JUNE LAST YEAR, AFTER SEVERAL
YEARS OF INTER-PARTY STRIFE. THAT COMPROMISE ENVISIONED
THE DISSOLUTION OF THE WORLD WAR II RENT CONTROL SYSTEM,
STILL IN FORCE IN URBAN AREAS, BY A GRADUAL INCREASE IN

RENTS AND A BALANCING INCREASE IN TAXES ON PRIVATE HOMES. WHEN THESE INCREASES PROVED IN PRACTICE TO BE GREATER THAN FORESEEN, LEGISLATION WAS REQUIRED TO LIMIT THE EXTENT OF THE CURRENT INCREASES. THE JUNE 6 COMPROMISE BILL WAS FINALLY SUPPORTED BY THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, LIBERALS, RADICALS, CONSERVATIVES AND THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY.

11. UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM - ON THE MAJOR ISSUE OF UNEMPLOYMENT, HOWEVER, WHICH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT HAD MADE ITS PRIMARY OBJECTIVE, LITTLE WAS ACCOMPLISHED IN THE FOLKETING SESSION. THE LIBERAL PARTY, WHOSE ANTI-INFLATIONARY ECONOMIC POLICY PROBABLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE RISE IN UNEMPLOYMENT, WAS UNWILLING TO OPEN THE FLOOD GATES TO PERMIT A LARGE-SCALE GOVERNMENT SPENDING

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PROGRAM. AS A CONSEQUENCE, THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE FOLKETING SESSION CLOSED JUNE 20 THAT THE SUMMER WOULD BE DEVOTED TO A FULL-SCALE RECONSIDERATION OF THE UNEMPLOYMENT POLICY. THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS, WHICH ARE EXPECTED TO BE DISCLOSED IN THE NEAR FUTURE, ARE REPORTED TO CONTAIN SOME DRASTIC MEASURES. THE GOVERNMENT HAS, MEANWHILE, BENEFITTED FROM THE SEASONAL DECLINE IN UNEMPLOYMENT WHICH HAS DROPPED THE RATE FROM 7 PERCENT TO SLIGHTLY LESS THAN 5 PERCENT AT PRESENT, ENOUGH TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE. IN FACT, THE SEASONALLY-CORRECTED RATE HAS BEEN WORSE THAN IN MANY YEARS AND THE PROSPECTS FOR THE FALL AND WINTER OF 1975-76 ARE EVEN MORE SEVERE THAN IN THE PAST WINTER. PRESENT ESTIMATES, SELDOM MENTIONED PUBLICLY, RUN AS HIGH AS 9 PERCENT OR 160,000 PERSONS UNEMPLOYED BY NEXT JANUARY.

12. POLITICAL CLIMATE

WHILE THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ACHIEVING THIS RATHER IMPRESSIVE LEGISLATIVE RECORD, IT HAS ENJOYED A PERIOD OF RESPITE FROM POLITICAL ATTACK. IN FACT, DURING THE PAST FIVE MONTHS, A POLITICAL BURGFRID HAS BEEN IN EFFECT. ANKER JORGENSEN DECLARED IN MARCH THAT THE OPPOSITION WAS BEING TOO KIND TO HIM. THE REASONS FOR THIS SUSPENSION OF NORMAL POLITICAL CONTROVERSY ARE NOT HARD TO DISCERN. NONE OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES WISHED TO APPEAR IN STRONG OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS IN THE UNEMPLOYMENT AREA. IT WAS ENOUGH SIMPLY TO MAINTAIN A TIGHT HOLD ON THE PURSE STRINGS. SECONDLY, THE PERIOD HAS BEEN ONE IN WHICH MORE THAN USUAL ATTENTION HAS BEEN DIRECTED AT EXTERNAL POLITICAL EVENTS - THE MIDDLE EAST AND ESPECIALLY THE DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL. THE LATTER, IN FACT, STIMULATED THE ONLY REAL POLITICAL ACTIVITY DURING THE PERIOD WHEN VICE-

CHAIRMAN OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, KJELD OLESEN, CHALLENGED THE COMMUNIST PARTY TO DECLARE ITS POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY. AS COULD BE EXPECTED, THE MOSCOW-LEANING DANISH COMMUNISTS DELCARED THEMSELVES SOLIDLY BEHIND THEIR PORTUGUESE COUNTERPARTS.

13. THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON, HOWEVER, FOR THIS TRUCE
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WAS THE UNFAVORABLE TREND (FOR THE TWO LARGE PARTIES) IN THE GALLUP POLLS DURING THIS PERIOD. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS HAD ANTICIPATED THAT GOVERNMENT POWER WOULD ACCELERATE THEIR REGAINING THE TRADITIONAL LEVEL OF POPULAR SUPPORT - CLOSE TO 40 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE - WHICH THE 1960'S ACCUSTOMED THEM TO CONSIDER THEIR NORMAL LEVEL. AS THE PARTY LEADER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISASTROUS ELECTION OF 1973 WHEN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT S

GOT ONLY 26 PERCENT OF THE VOTE, ANKER JORGENSEN'S PERSONAL FATE IS DEPENDENT UPON A CONTINUING, STEADY INCREASE IN THAT POPULAR SUPPORT. YET THE POLLS OVER THE PAST FIVE MONTHS INDICATE A LEVELLING OFF AT AROUND 31 PERCENT. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SPECTRUM, THE LIBERALS' SURPRISING SUPPORT IN THE JANUARY ELECTION, WHERE THEY OBTAINED NEARLY 25 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL VOTE, HAS BEEN RAPIDLY ERODING.

14. IN ITS FIRST FIVE MONTHS, THE SECOND JORGENSEN GOVERNMENT HAS PLACED THE THREE PARTIES OF THE EXTREME LEFT IN POLITICAL LIMBO. THE COMMUNISTS, WHO UNDER THE PREVIOUS HARTLING GOVERNMENT DOMINATED THE LEFT WING OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT, HAVE LOST ELECTORAL SUPPORT AT SUCCESSIVE SOUNDINGS OF PUBLIC OPINION. THE LEFT SOCIALISTS ARE ENGAGED IN IDEOLOGICAL FRATRICIDE AND THE SOCIALIST PEOPLE'S PARTY IS ABLE TO PLAY A POLITICAL ROLE ONLY THROUGH ITS REPRESENTATIVE IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AT STRASBOURG. ON THE RIGHT, ON THE OTHER HAND, MOGENS GLISTRUP'S TAX PROTEST PARTY HAS INCREASED ITS PUBLIC POPULARITY TO THE POINT OF BECOMING THE PROBABLE SECOND LARGEST PARTY IF ELECTIONS WERE TO BE HELD NOW. THIS DESPITE THE FACT THAT HE IS UNDER CRIMINAL INDICTMENT AND HAS RECENTLY LOST TWO SERIOUS CIVIL CASES THAT COULD UNRAVEL HIS ENTIRE HOUSE-OF-TAX-EVASION CARDS. AND THIS MOVE TO GLISTRUP HAS BEEN AT THE EXPENSE OF THE PARTIES OF THE MODERATE RIGHT GROUPING, ESPECIALLY POUL HARTLING'S LIBERAL PARTY, WHICH HAS HAD TO PLAY A PASSIVE ROLE IN THE MONTHS SINCE THE ELECTION.

15. AS A CONSEQUENCE, THE LIBERALS HAVE QUIETLY LET IT BE KNOWN THAT THE BURGFRIED WOULD NOT CONTINUE INTO THE FALL. FORMER FINANCE MINISTER ANDERS ANDERSEN ATTACKED THE GOVT'S PROPENSITY FOR "HEAVY SPENDING" AND POUL HARTLING ANNOUNCED THAT HE ANTICIPATED A GOVERNMENT CRISIS IN THE FALL. ON JULY 20, A PAST CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY, ERIK NINN HANSEN,

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STIRRED THE POLITICAL SCENE OUT OF ITS SUMMER TORPOR BY DECLARING HIS READINESS TO LEAVE HIS PARTY IF OTHER NON-SOCIALIST PARTY LEADERS WOULD DO THE SAME WITH THE PURPOSE OF FORMING A LARGE UNIFIED PARTY ON THE RIGHT. THIS PROPOSAL WAS PROMPTLY REJECTED BY ALL THE PARTY CHAIRMEN, INCLUDING HIS OWN, BUT IT WAS EVIDENCE THAT POUL HARTLING'S STRATEGY OF CREATING A LARGE CENTER-RIGHT PARTY AS A COUNTER FORCE TO THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IS STILL A VITAL FACTOR IN THE THINKING OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES.

16. PROSPECTS

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT WILL BE RUNNING A GAMBLE OF SOME DIMENSIONS THIS FALL AS IT ATTEMPTS TO COUNTER THE EXPECTED SEVERE LEVELS OF UNEMPLOYMENT WITH THE LIMITED POWER IT HAS AVAILABLE AS A MINORITY GOVERNMENT. JORGENSEN HAS REPEATEDLY STATES HIS WILLINGNESS TO BROADEN THE GOVERNMENT TO DEAL MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE CRITICAL ECONOMIC SITUATION, BUT HE HAS HAD NO POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM THE ONLY OTHER PARTY THAT COULD GIVE SUCH A COALITION A MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT, THE LIBERALS. THE LATTER APPEAR TO BE INTENT ON LETTING THE GOVERNMENT PROVE ITSELF UNABLE TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH THE UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION IN ORDER TO RETURN TO POWER AS THE ONLY PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE TO THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. TO COUNTER THIS STRATEGY, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS CAN BE EXPECTED TO PROPOSE SOME DRASTIC MEASURES INVOLVING SUBSTANTIAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES AT THE COST OF AN UNPRECEDENTED BUDGET DEFICIT. THEY CAN ALSO BE COUNTED ON TO BE LESS PRAGMATIC AND MORE SOCIALISTIC, PROBABLY EVEN RESUMING THE BATTLE FOR "ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY", AT LEAST, TO THE EXTENT OF A PARLIAMENTARY COMMITMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO IT.

17. WITH SUCH DIVERGENT POLICIES, THE STAGE WILL BE SET FOR A SERIOUS CONFRONTATION THIS FALL BETWEEN THE TWO MAJOR OPPONENTS IN PARLIAMENT. WHETHER THAT CONFRONTATION IS PERMITTED TO DEVELOP INTO A NEW ELECTION OR NOT -- ALL PARTY LEADERS PROFESS THEIR DESIRE NOT TO HAVE ELECTIONS -- WILL DEPEND ON TWO PRIMARY FACTORS: (A) THE SIZE OF THE PROBABLE GLISTRUP VOTE; AND (B) SOME INDICATION OF AN EXPECTED EUROPEAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY.

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